

The Denmark Regional Series: Fyn

Class Handout: Intermediate

7 August 2021

History

Fyn and all of Denmark east of it were covered by a thick glacier during the ice age. All of Denmark that was under the ice has 5% clay in its soil and that made it good for farming. After the ice receded much of Denmark including Fyn was filled with large forests and people came to live on Fyn thousands of years ago in fact the Odense area has been populated at least since 2000 BC and Fyn and the surrounding islands are believed to have been their own petty kingdom originally. During the Iron age 200 AD to 500 AD widespread violence caused the inhabitants to avoid the coastal areas. This was only reversed when the cities started being developed a thousand years later. Starting around AD 1000 the old forests were cut down to make room for agriculture. By the 1470's wood had become extremely scarce on the island and had to be imported from places like Norway. Despite this Fyn continued to develop during the Middle Ages and most of the cities were built around the 1200's.

After the Swedes marched across Fyn in 1658, the Danish allies came to the rescue, but unfortunately, they brought the plague. Based on the available parish records, it is estimated that 23% of the inhabitants of Fyn died.

The small island of Ærø was part of Schleswig until 1864. When Schleswig was ceded to Prussia, it was incorporated into Svendborg amt.

- 2000 BC: The Odense area is first settled.
- AD 1-Present: The coastline has risen by a max of 0.5 meters and fallen by a max of 1 meter.
- 200 to 500 the population of Fyn withdrew from the coastline due to widespread wars and violence.
- 3rd Century: Some kind of princely power exists at Gudme.
- 500's: Gammelborg is founded.
- 960: Fyn is unified with the rest of Denmark.
- 13 March 988: The name Odense is first mentioned.
- 1000: Rapid deforestation in Denmark.
- 1000-1100: The moldboard plow is introduced to Denmark.
- 1000: Villages touching the coast start to appear, but the dwellings are as far inland as possible.
- 1050 Activity at Kerteminde.
- 1070 Adam of Bremen claims there are 100 churches on Fyn.
- 1100-1150: Svendborg is established.
- 1193: Nyborg (Nyborg) castle is first mentioned.
- 1202: Nyborg town is first mentioned and given city rights.
- 1202-1241: Fåborg is given city rights.
- 12th century: Assens is given city rights.

- 13th-15th centuries: Horses are exported out of Ribe, Fyn, Lolland, and Falster.
- 1229: Swinæburgh (Svendborg), and Foburgh (Fåborg) are first mentioned.
- 1231: Assens, Hægnæthescogh (Hindsgavl), and Mæthælfar (Middelfart) are first mentioned.
- 1247: Duke Abel burns Odense city.
- 1250 Knytlinge Saga claims there are 300 churches on Fyn.
- 1253: Svendborg is given city rights.
- 1287: Rudkøbing is first mentioned and given city rights.
- 1288: Bogense is first mentioned and given city rights.
- 1300 there is one stone church every 15 to 20 km on Fyn.
- 1323: The frozen Great Belt between Sealand and Funen formed a public highway for six weeks around Candlemas that year.
- 1335: Odense is given city rights.
- 1350: Kiertheminde (Kerteminde) is first mentioned.
- 15th Century: People start purposely living on the coast in Funen.
- 7 Dec 1413: Kerteminde is given city rights.
- 1473: Fyns vedtægt is passed prohibits the sale of oak and beech, the excessive pasturing of horses, and the keeping of goats was prohibited.
- 1475: Peasants on Funen are sailing annually to Jutland to buy firewood and timber.
- 1492: Fyns vedtægt is passed once again.
- 1509: Fyn is trading for timber from Norway.
- By 1550: 25% of hamlets with the name -torp and 10% of the hamlets with the suffixes -by, -bølle, and -lev are deserted.
- 1658: The Swedes march across Fyn along their way to Copenhagen.
- 1660: 23% of Fyn's inhabitants die of plague brought by their allies.
- 19 February 1662: The medieval len become amter. In this area the boundaries and names remain the same.
- 21 June 1794: Assens, Hindsgavl, Rugård, and Skt. Hans are combined to create Odense amt. Nygård and Tranekær are combined to create Svendborg amt.
- 31 December 1867: Ærø is added to Svendborg amt.
- 1970: The amter are dissolved.

Church Records

- Munkebo: Fires 5 January 1740, December 1773, and 12 October 1842
- Allesø, Næsbyhoved, Broby: A fire 27 May 1802
- Søllinge & Hellerup: A fire 1813
- Herredsted: A fire 8 October 1843
- Brudager & Gudme: A fire 16 March 1861
- Longelse & Fuglsbølle: A fire 6 December 1862
- Sønder Broby: A fire 27 June 1868
- Hesselager: A fire 25-26 April 1871
- Tullebølle & Tranekær: A fire 19 May 1875
- Snøde & Stoense: A fire 15 July 1883

Key Websites

<https://www.virgo-fyn.dk/>

- Abstracted parish records for Odense & Svendborg
- Abstracted probate records
- Abstracted guild records for all the cities
- Abstracted prison records 1849-1865
- Standardized spelling of names making searches easier

<https://fynhistorie.dis-danmark.dk/>

- Parish records
- Probate records
- Copyhold records
- Some court records

Here is a page that has links to a great many abstracted church records all over Denmark.

<https://slaegt.dk/kilder/hvor-finder-du/online-kilder-sub/linksamling-kirkeboger-1630-19/>

Case Study

This case study will use some of these available websites to extend the ancestry of Kirsten Hansdatter (1736-1776). Kværndrup has a large gap in its records from 1710 to 1756 so if Kirsten was born there, she does not have a baptism record. However, it is still possible to extend her line by using the available indexed records for Fyn.

1. Kirsten was buried 22 July 1776 in Kværndrup parish, Sunds herred, Svendborg amt, Denmark. She was 40 and the wife Niels Jensen Snedker. The surviving Kværndrup parish records have been abstracted at <https://fynhistorie.dk>. Click on the following link https://fynhistorie.dis-danmark.dk/files/historie-info.dk/kvarndrup1756_1798.pdf. Do a Ctr-F search for "Kirsten Hansdatter" to find her 1776 burial.
2. This family leased their land from Egeskov estate. Egeskov's probate records have been abstracted at <https://fynhistorie.dis-danmark.dk/node/14908>. Additionally, many of the ancestors we are researching lived at Falde and Trunderup hamlets. Those probates and some other information have been neatly compiled here <https://fynhistorie.dis-danmark.dk/files/historie-info.dk/jordegne%20g%C3%A5rde%20og%20falde.pdf>. Both options contain the probates we need. For convenience, click on the latter. One or both of Kirsten's parents could have a probate that can extend her line despite the missing birth records. Click the link and then do a Ctr-F search for "Niels Jensen Snedker." Read through each of the entries until you find the 1788 probate for Pernille Rasmusdatter. What does this tell us about the family?
3. Also read the entry immediately above for Hans Nielsen. Does this add anything new?
4. Pernille Rasmusdatter died in 1788. So, she should be on the 1787 census which will give her age. To keep the focus on the websites, here is the link. It is the first family on this page <https://www.sa.dk/ao-soegesider/da/billedviser?bsid=762#762,54982>.
5. Pernille's calculated birthyear is 1710. This means she might not have a christening having been born right at the start of the gap in the records
6. In the probate collection we looked at the preceding six probates above Pernille's are for her family members. The table above also has some entries for them in the parish records. Who were the parents of Pernille Rasmusdatter?
7. We are finally early enough that we have parish records again. Anne Madsdatter's probate identifies two of her brothers, Frantz and Johan. There is only one man in the

parish who had children named Anne Madsdatter, and Johan Madsen. This was Matz Rasmussen of Egeskov.

8. Frantz is not found in the church records, but the church records start in December 1657 and Matz Rasmussen first identified child was born in February 1659 and his marriage is not in the parish. Franz was probably born in 1657 before the parish records begin. A total of six children can be found by doing a ctr+F for "Matz Rasmussen"
9. In 1695 Matz died at the age of 73. He was likely born around 1623.